

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) A method of accessing a remote postage account from a local postage evidencing device, comprising:

configuring the local postage evidencing device to communicate with a plurality of vendors providing access to a plurality of remote postage accounts;

connecting to a remote postage evidencing system via a local postage evidencing device, said local postage evidencing device having a local postage account;

identifying a remote postage account administered by a selected vendor of said plurality of vendors on the remote postage evidencing system that is to be used to print postage on the local postage evidencing device;

selecting a desired postage amount to be printed on the local postage evidencing device;

reducing a balance on the remote postage account without transferring the value of the postage amount to the local account, thereby maintaining a same local postage account balance; and

printing the desired postage amount on the local postage evidencing device.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

printing the desired postage amount on the local postage evidencing device without reducing a balance on the local postage account.

16. (Original) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

authenticating a user with the remote postage evidencing system.

17. (Original) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

connecting to the remote postage evidencing system using a wireless connection.

18. (Original) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

connecting to the remote postage evidencing system using a wireline connection.

19. (Original) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

identifying a user to the local postage evidencing device using a biometric input.

20. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the local postage evidencing device is a postage meter.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20 wherein the local postage account is a register that reflects the amount of postage that is currently authorized on the device.

22. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the local postage evidencing device is a postage dispensing kiosk.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22 wherein the local postage account is an amount of postage purchased by a user at the kiosk.

24. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the local postage evidencing device is a personal computer coupled to a printer.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein the local postage account is a stored value of postage that has been downloaded from an Internet-based postage service.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14 wherein the remote postage account vendor evidencing system is an Internet-based postage service.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14 wherein the remote postage evidencing account system comprises a postage account established by the United States Postal Service.

28-38. (Canceled)

39. (New) A postage kiosk comprising:
a local postage account;
a payment acceptance means for accepting payment for postage to be purchased from the local postage account by a user; and
a communication module configured to communicatively connect the kiosk to one or more remote postage server systems, at least one of said remote server systems having a plurality of remote postage accounts, wherein the kiosk is adapted to selectively use the local postage account and one or more of the plurality of remote postage accounts in postage transactions.
40. (New) The postage kiosk of claim 39 further comprising a printer for printing purchased postage.
41. (New) The postage kiosk of claim 40 wherein a balance on the remote postage account is reduced without transferring a purchased value of postage to the local account, thereby maintaining a same local postage account balance when printing the purchased postage.
42. (New) The postage kiosk of claim 39 wherein the communication module is configured to authenticate a user with the one or more remote postage server systems.
43. (New) The postage kiosk of claim 39 wherein at least one of said at least one remote postage server systems is an Internet-based postage service.
44. (New) The postage kiosk of claim 39 wherein at least one of said at least one remote postage server systems comprises a postage account established by the United States Postal Service.
45. (New) The postage kiosk of claim 39 wherein the kiosk is configured to communicatively connect to one or more remote postage server systems from a plurality of vendors.
46. (New) The postage kiosk of claim 39 wherein the communication module is configured to access remote payment systems.

47. (New) A method comprising:

configuring said postage evidencing device to have a local postage account, said local postage account configured for business or personal use of an owner of said postage evidencing device; and

configuring said postage meter to access one or more remote postage accounts not directly related to the local postage account, said one or more remote postage accounts configured for an alternate use for a user of said postage meter, wherein said alternate use is separate than said business or personal use of the owner of said postage evidencing device.

48. (New) The method of claim 47 wherein the alternate use of the user is a business use of the user.

49. (New) The method of claim 47 further comprising configuring the postage evidencing device to print a postage amount which has been purchased from a remote postage account without reducing a balance on the local postage account.

50. (New) The method of claim 47 further comprising configuring the postage evidencing device to communicate with a plurality of vendors providing remote postage accounts.

51. (New) The method of claim 50 wherein the remote postage evidencing account comprises a postage account established by the United States Postal Service.

52. (New) The method of claim 47 wherein the remote postage account is an Internet-based postage service.